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THE CLASSICAL JOURNAL

VOLUME IV

JUNE 1909

NUMBER 8

Editorial

CLASSICAL STUDIES AND THEOLOGY

Among the most successful efforts that have been made in recent years for the increase of interest in classical studies have been the discussions on the value of humanistic, particularly classical, studies as a preparation for the several professions, that have been an important feature of the annual classical conferences held at the University of Michigan. The conference of 1908 considered classical studies as a preparation for the study of theology. People who have come to think that the new problems that confront the minister of today are such as to call for a type of training that has little place for Latin and Greek would do well to read the emphatic declarations of President Mackenzie of Hartford Theological Seminary and Professor Hugh Black of Union.

President Mackenzie says:

In any case the man who looks forward to the ministry ought to take the broadest and strongest college course which is possible. But undoubtedly there are departments of study which those looking forward to the ministry ought to pursue, when we take the broad view of the ministry which I have suggested today. I believe that Latin and Greek ought to be studied by such men through the whole four years of their college course, so that, having had eight years in these languages, they can go to the seminary able to use them with some degree of comfort, and able to appreciate their value as soon as they enter upon biblical study and the investigations of church history . . . I trust that, as a teacher of theology, I am not deaf to the clamant voices which appeal to us for men who are trained to meet a living situation and to deal with the often crushing burdens of our modern world. It is in the very name of those voices, with their pathos in my heart, that I yearn for a ministry in our land which stands high enough to measure, and is strong enough to grapple with, their task.

Professor Black says:

Complaint has often been made about the short pastorates that are so common today in the ministry. There are many reasons, but one is that the intellectual demands are greater than ever before, and men find it difficult to last out. We are perhaps justified in assuming that a profounder training in these foundation subjects would enable a man to wear longer. An early training which included Latin and Greek would give some mastery not to be attained by the varied browsing of more modern methods. We would not have so many fads in religion if men knew more of the history of thought Apart from the absurdity of a man's dealing in any profound way with a book whose language he is ignorant of, it ought to be remembered that practically all learned commentaries are unreadable to the man who does not know Hebrew and Greek. . . . Whatever place is given to other methods of training for special work, Latin and Greek will remain as a necessary part of the equipment of the theological scholar.

In view of statements like these it is encouraging to learn that at a meeting of several departments of the Religious Education Association, together with the Interdenominational Conference of Church and Guild Workers in State Universities, held in Chicago, February 10, a committee of twelve was appointed to formulate "an ideal or suggestive course of collegiate study preparatory to a course in a theological seminary." Dean Shailer Mathews of the University of Chicago is the chairman, and among the members are Presidents Falconer, of the University of Toronto, Faunce, of Brown, King, of Oberlin, Mackenzie, of Hartford Theological Seminary, and Professor Kelsey, of the University of Michigan.

The work of such a committee ought to be of real value to college students who are preparing for the ministry. Probably no group of men in the colleges are electing their courses with such vague ideas of the preliminary training that is needed for their professional studies, and no men are in more danger of contenting themselves with the more popular and more obviously practical subjects. Comparatively few of them have the insight and courage to choose the long and hard discipline of the ancient languages and literatures; many are content to drop Greek before they can read a page of it accurately; few of them realize what it means to a minister to have a first-hand knowledge of the language of the New Testament, or of the Greek and Roman literature that forms the background of early Christian thought. Only here and there one of them knows his Plato as any man ought to

know it who expects to teach a materialistic generation the reality and immortality of the soul.

If the committee of twelve shall succeed in presenting to the men in the colleges better ideals of college training, they will do a lasting service to the profession that stands for the things of the spirit, and whose indispensable allies are the men who exalt the humanistic studies.

C. D. A.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SMALL COLLEGE TOWARD THE CLASSICS

[At the April meeting of the Classical Association of New England President Garfield, of Williams College, gave a significant address on the place of classical training in the college curriculum. The address was of peculiar significance as coming from one who has recently been called upon to balance in the most impartial way the educational values of the several departments of the college curriculum, and who had already become convinced of the fundamental importance of classical studies as related to his own department at Princeton, that of political science. He emphasized the fact that no undergraduate could hope to go far in mastering the multitude of political and economic questions of the day, and he asserted that one of the most profitable things that the student can do is to acquaint himself with fundamental political principles through the history and the political literature of Greece and Rome.]

The following is an abstract of President Garfield's address.—ED.]

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Classical Association of New England:

The invitation of your President¹ to address the association is one that I could not lightly disregard. My college training in the classics was under his instruction, so I should have yielded to him as in former days when a request was made of me. However, Professor Hewitt is entirely right in stating to you that my presence here is due to my interest in the preservation of the teaching of the classics, both in school and in college. I wish to offer my testimony in its behalf and to state the belief of one, at least, of our small colleges, that the study of Latin and Greek ought always to be included in the curriculum of the college and in the undergraduate department of the university.

The attitude of the college toward the classics depends upon its attitude toward learning. If the standard is to be determined by the requirements of bookkeeping and of railroad construction, the language and literature of the

¹ Professor Hewitt, of Williams College.